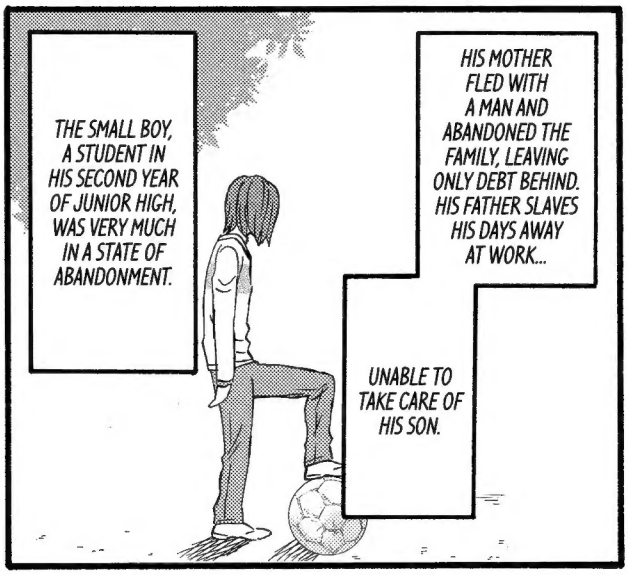
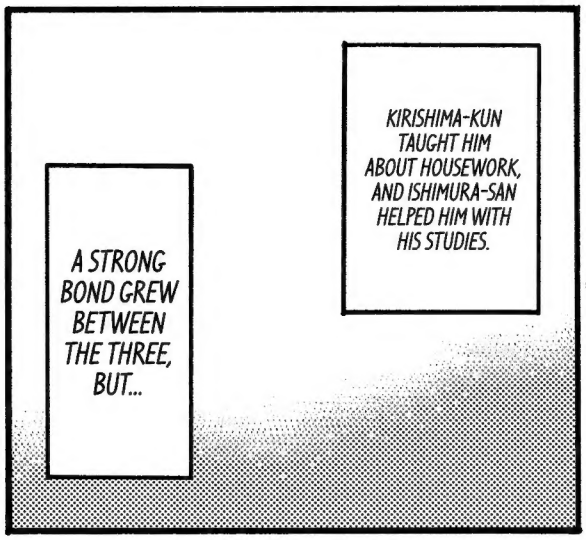
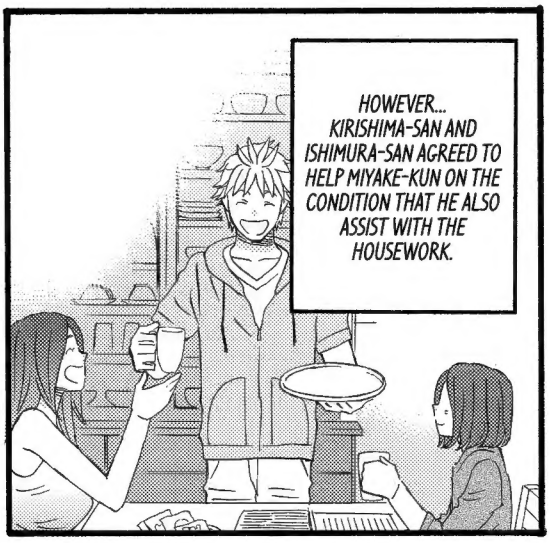
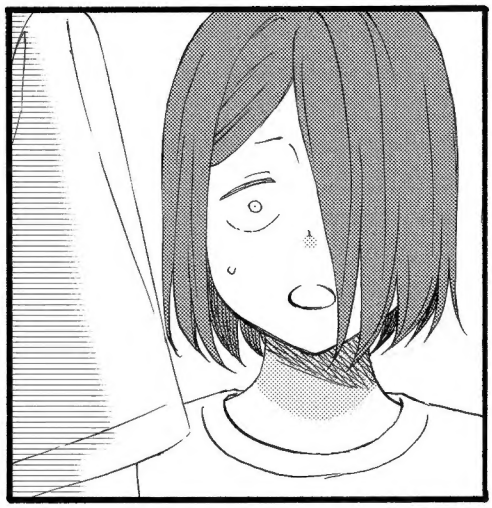

THE SMALL BOY, A STUDENT IN HIS SECOND YEAR OF JUNIOR HIGH, WAS VERY MUCH IN A STATE OF ABANDONMENT.
HIS MOTHER FLED WITH A MAN AND ABANDONED THE FAMILY, LEAVING ONLY DEBT BEHIND. HIS FATHER SLAVES HIS DAYS AWAY AT WORK...
UNABLE TO TAKE CARE OF HIS SON.

THE COUPLE MET MIYAKE JUN, A NEGLECTED CHILD IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
AND TEN MONTHS AFTER THEY GOT TOGETHER...

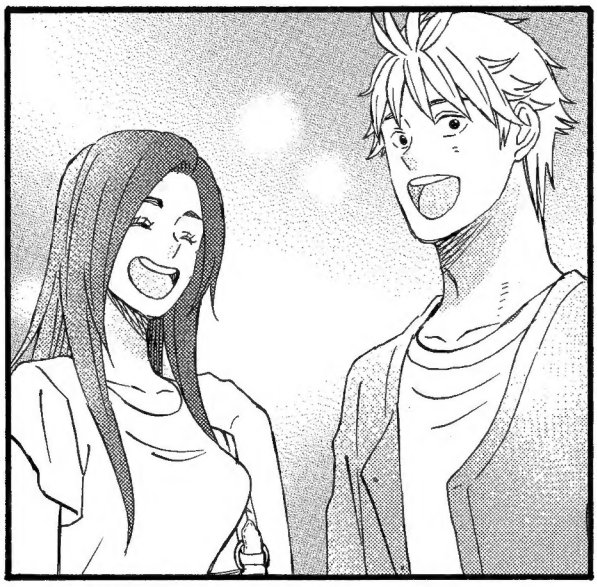

KIRISHIMA-KUN TAUGHT HIM ABOUT HOUSEWORK, AND ISHIMURA-SAN HELPED HIM WITH HIS STUDIES.
A STRONG BOND GREW BETWEEN THE THREE, BUT...

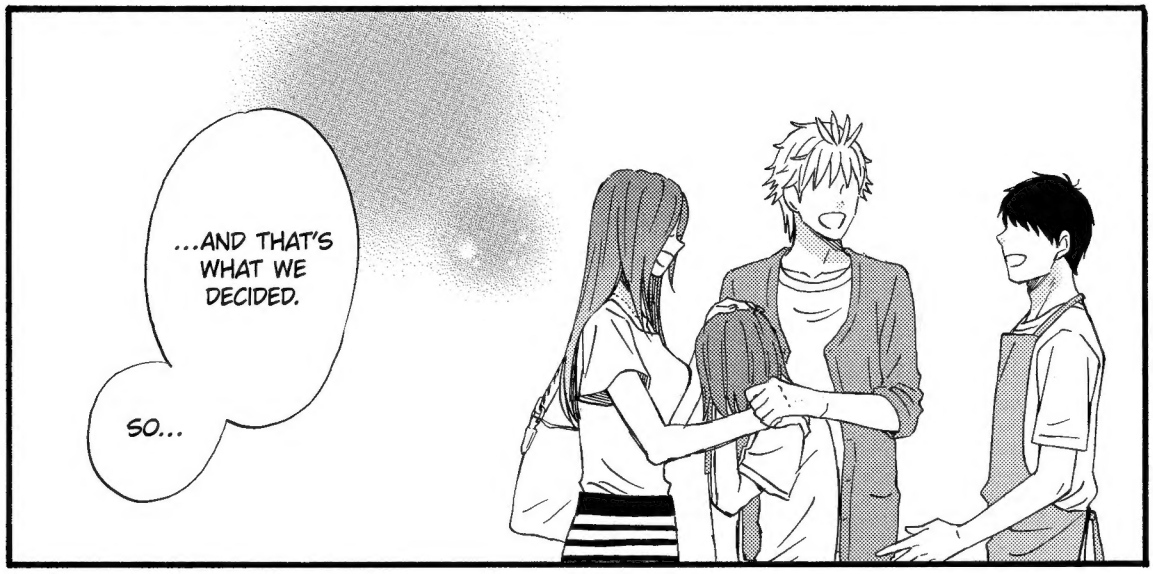

HOWEVER... KIRISHIMA-SAN AND ISHIMURA-SAN AGREED TO HELP MIYAKE-KUN ON THE CONDITION THAT HE ALSO ASSIST WITH THE HOUSEWORK.

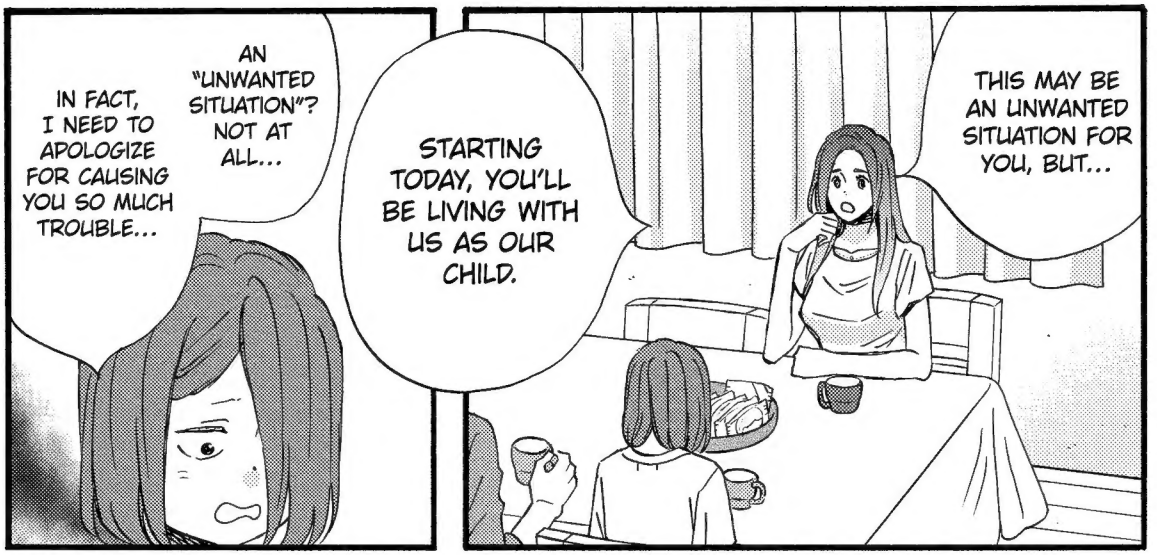
CONCERNED THAT HE WAS UNABLE TO MAKE HIS SON HAPPY, MIYAKE-KUN'S FATHER...
SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED.



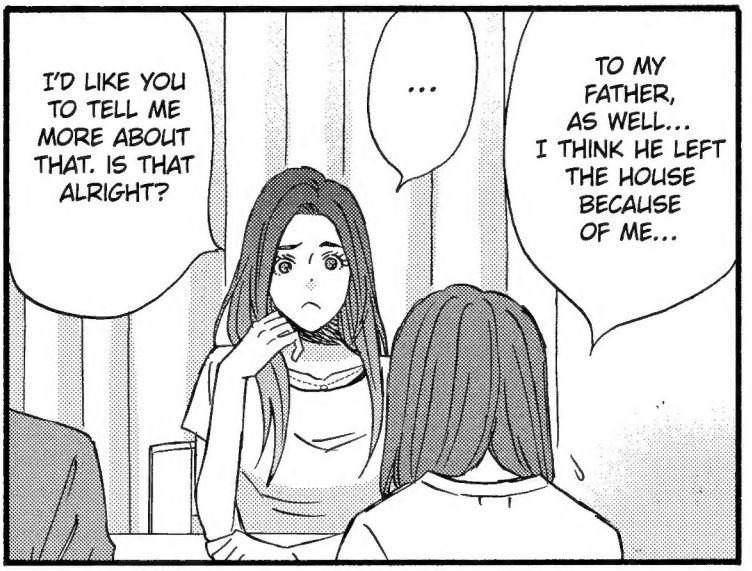
WITH NOWHERE TO GO, MIYAKE-KUN WAS PLACED IN A FOSTER HOME. BUT THEN...




...AND THAT'S WHAT WE DECIDED.
SO...

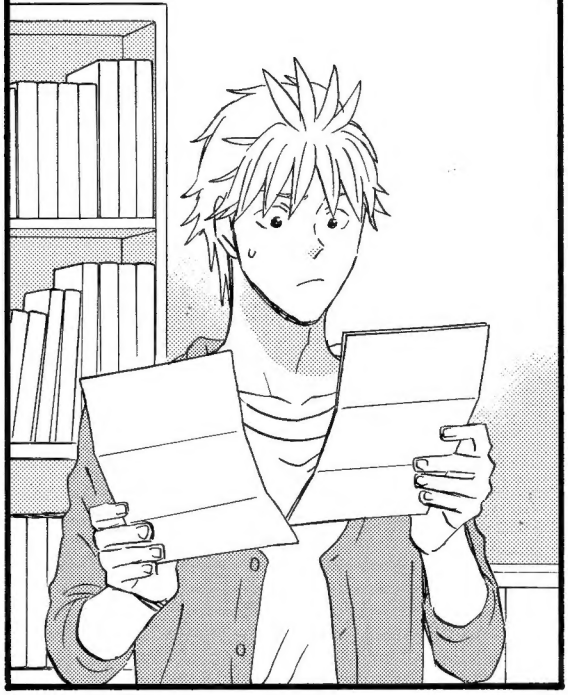

IN FACT, I NEED TO APOLOGIZE FOR CAUSING YOU SO MUCH TROUBLE...
AN "UNWANTED SITUATION"? NOT AT ALL...
STARTING TODAY, YOU'LL BE LIVING WITH US AS OUR CHILD.
THIS MAY BE AN UNWANTED SITUATION FOR YOU, BUT...

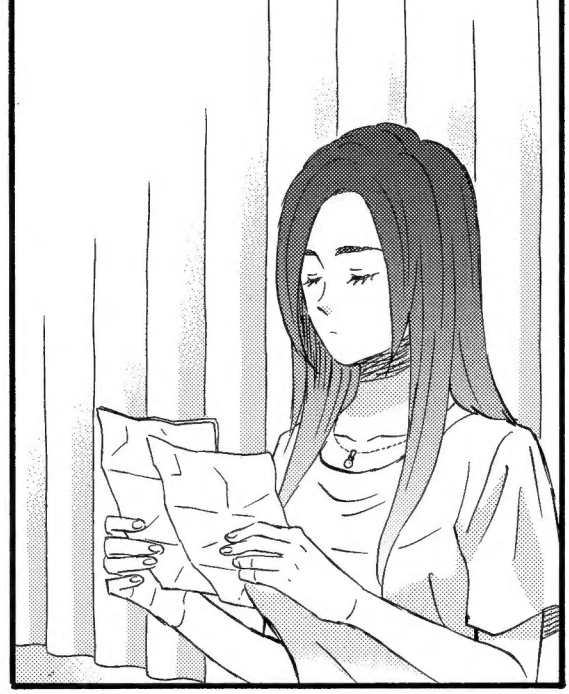
...IT'S FINE.
IF IT'S TOO DIFFICULT TO TALK ABOUT, IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE NOW, OKAY?

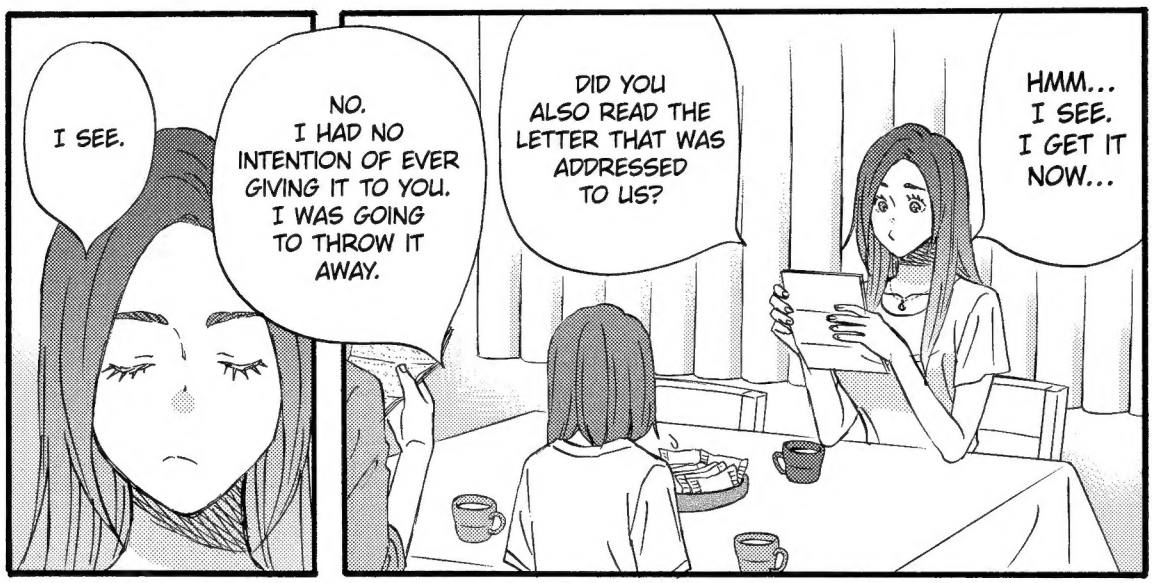

I'D LIKE YOU TO TELL ME MORE ABOUT THAT. IS THAT ALRIGHT?
...
TO MY FATHER, AS WELL... I THINK HE LEFT THE HOUSE BECAUSE OF ME...

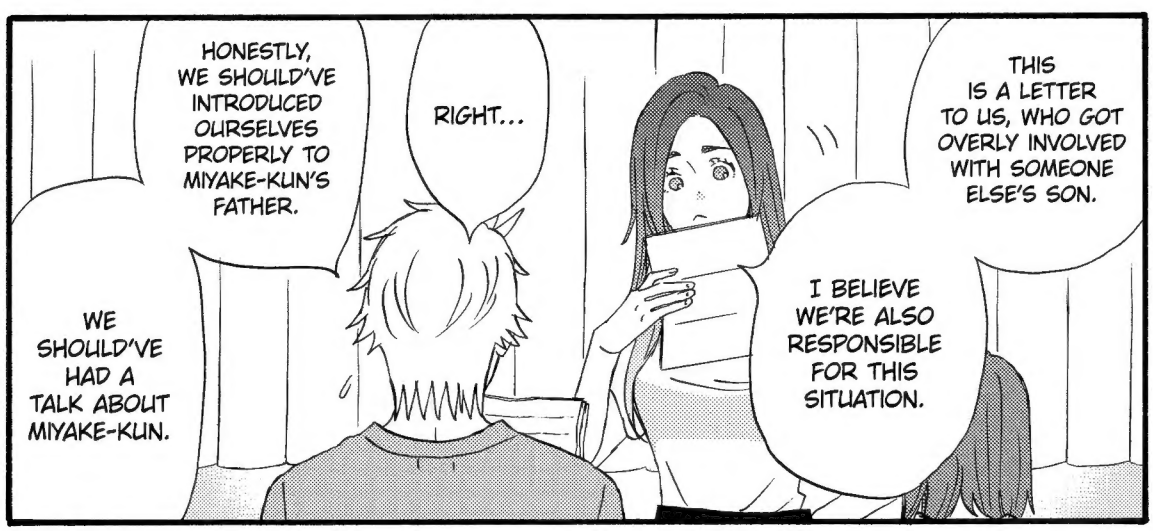
THE REASON WHY FATHER LEFT...
To Jun
To Kirishima-san and Ishimura-san
IF YOU READ THESE, I THINK YOU'LL UNDERSTAND...

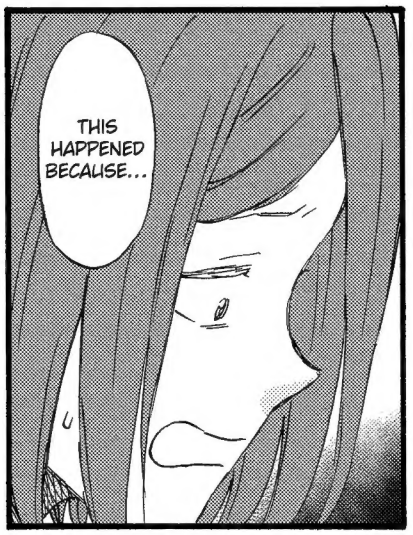
THIS IS FOR YOU...
To Jun

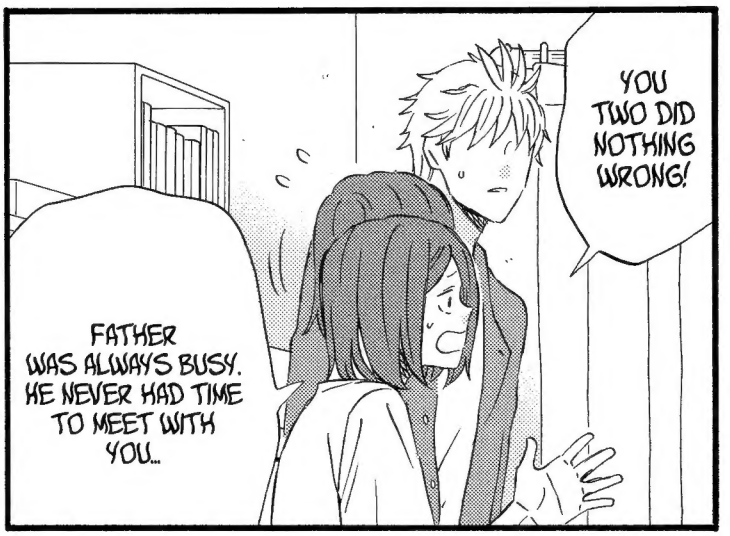




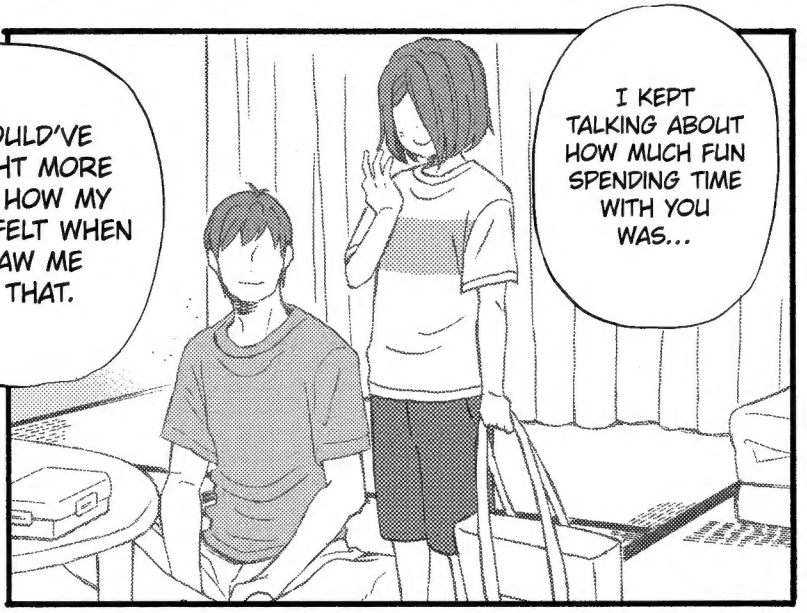

I SEE.
NO. I HAD NO INTENTION OF EVER GIVING IT TO YOU. I WAS GOING TO THROW IT AWAY.
DID YOU ALSO READ THE LETTER THAT WAS ADDRESSED TO US?
HMM... I SEE. I GET IT NOW...

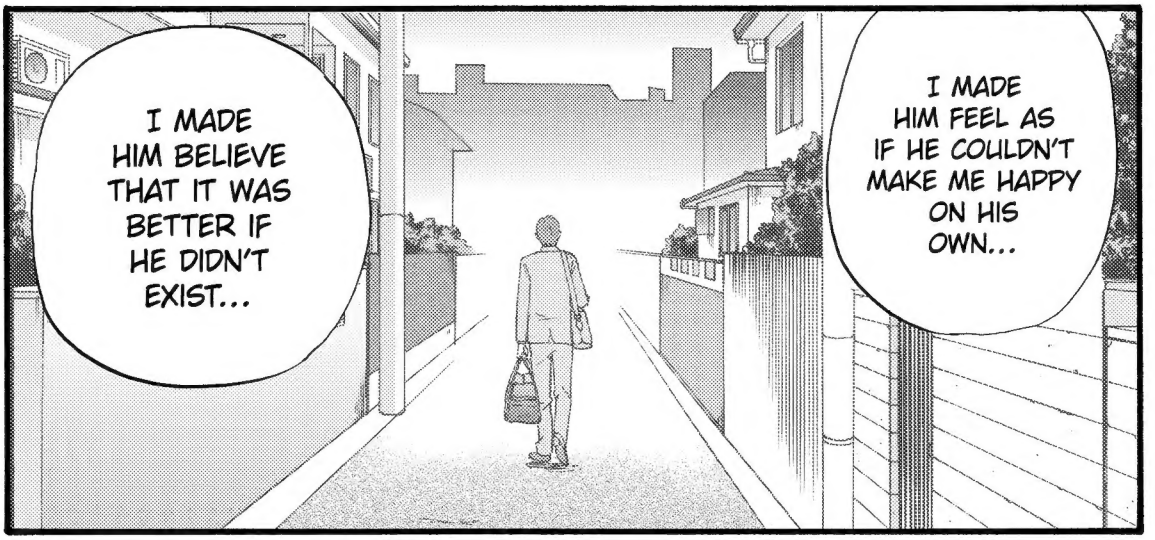

WE SHOULD'VE HAD A TALK ABOUT MIYAKE-KUN.
HONESTLY, WE SHOULD'VE INTRODUCED OURSELVES PROPERLY TO MIYAKE-KUN'S FATHER.
RIGHT...
I BELIEVE WE'RE ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS SITUATION.
THIS IS A LETTER TO US, WHO GOT OVERLY INVOLVED WITH SOMEONE ELSE'S SON.

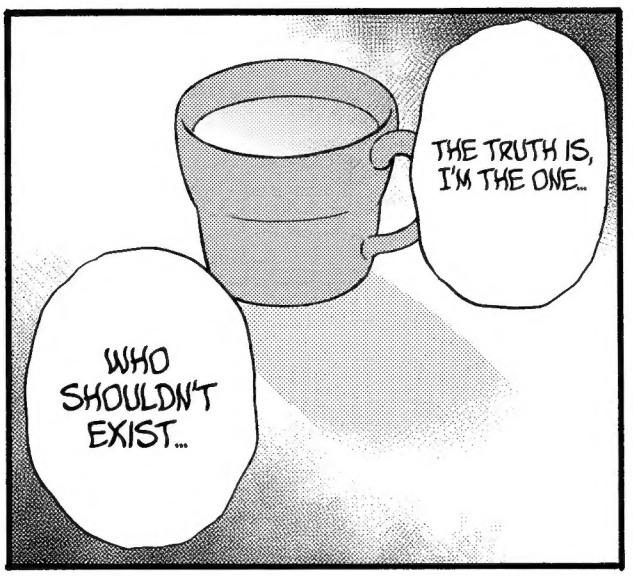

THIS HAPPENED BECAUSE...

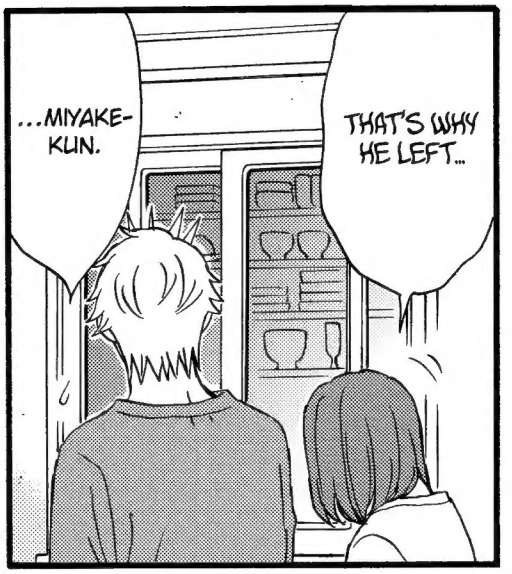

YOU TWO DID NOTHING WRONG!
FATHER WAS ALWAYS BUSY. HE NEVER HAD TIME TO MEET WITH YOU...

...
I SHOULD'VE THOUGHT MORE ABOUT HOW MY FATHER FELT WHEN HE SAW ME LIKE THAT.

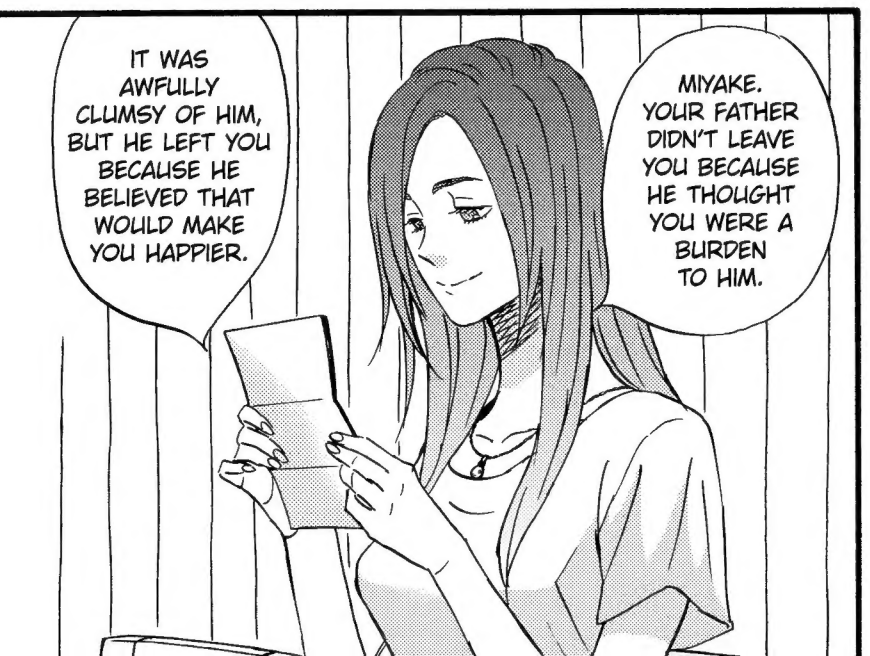

I KEPT TALKING ABOUT HOW MUCH FUN SPENDING TIME WITH YOU WAS...

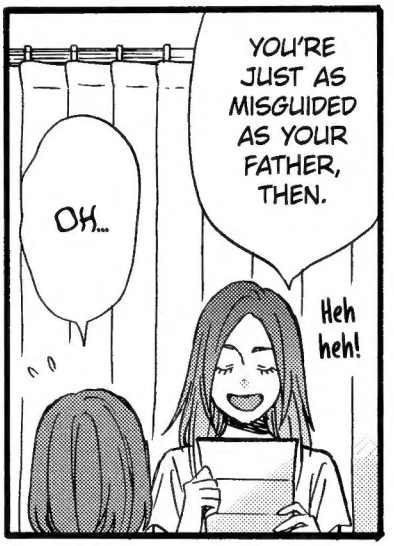

I MADE HIM BELIEVE THAT IT WAS BETTER IF HE DIDN'T EXIST...
I MADE HIM FEEL AS IF HE COULDN'T MAKE ME HAPPY ON HIS OWN...

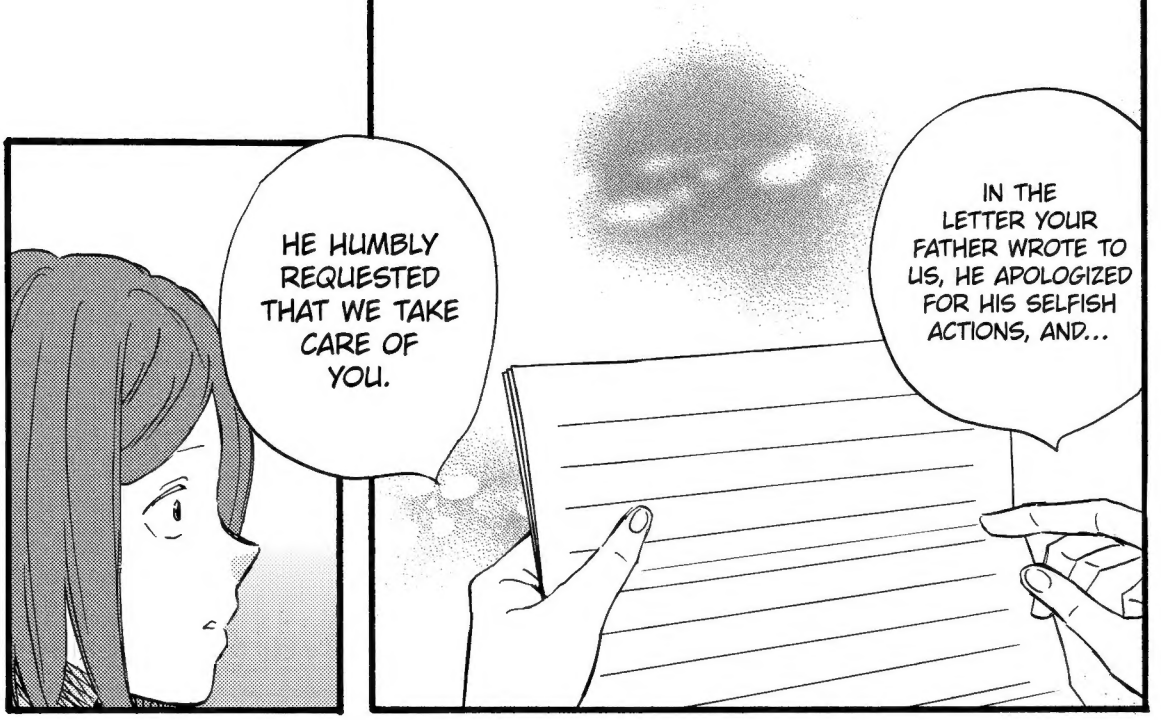

THE TRUTH IS, I'M THE ONE...
WHO SHOULDN'T EXIST...

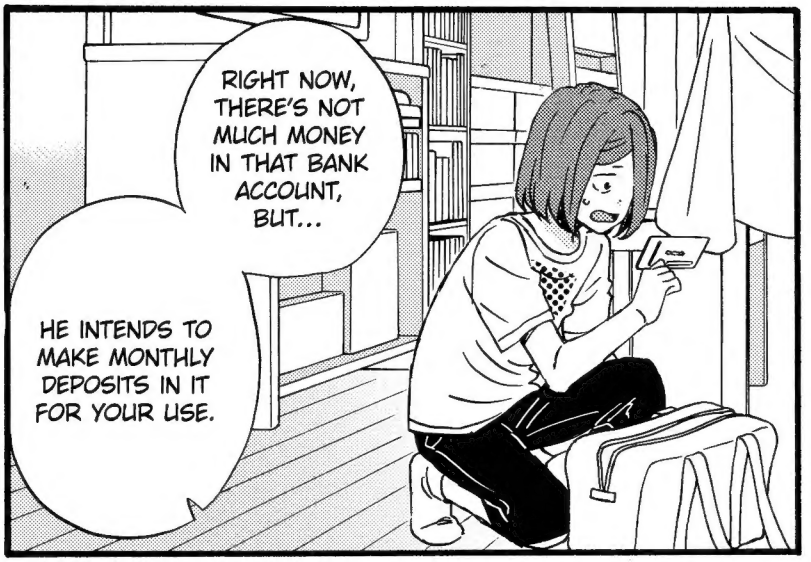

...MIYAKE-KUN.
THAT'S WHY HE LEFT...

WAS IT BECAUSE YOU BELIEVED THAT YOU "SHOULDN'T EXIST"...
THAT YOU LEFT WITHOUT TELLING US ANYTHING?

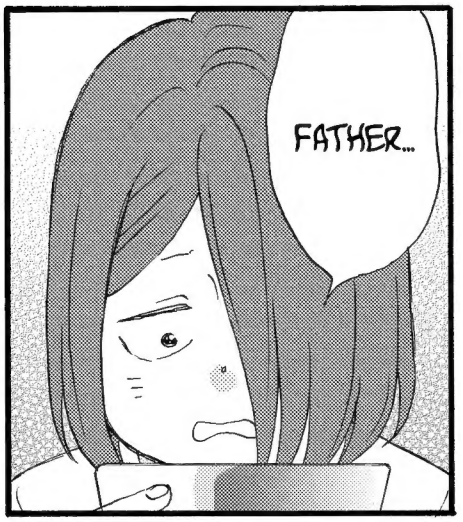

IT WAS AWFULLY CLUMSY OF HIM, BUT HE LEFT YOU BECAUSE HE BELIEVED THAT WOULD MAKE YOU HAPPIER.
MIYAKE. YOUR FATHER DIDN'T LEAVE YOU BECAUSE HE THOUGHT YOU WERE A BURDEN TO HIM.

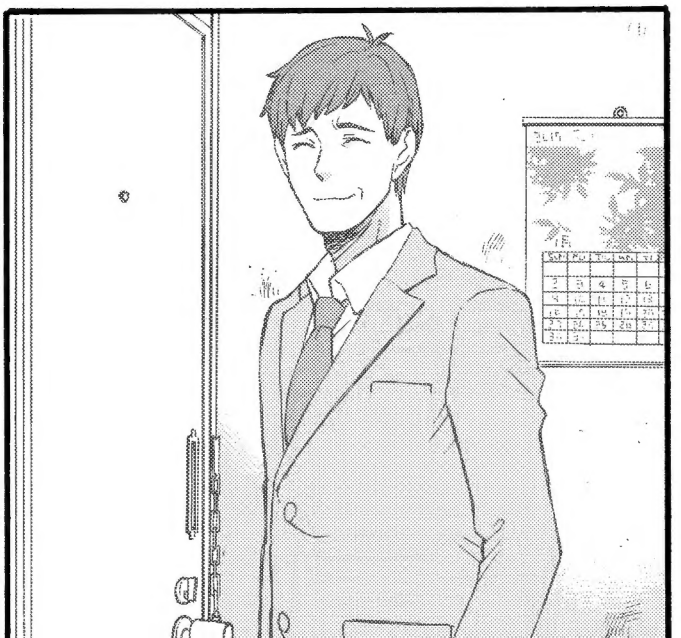

OH...
YOU'RE JUST AS MISGUIDED AS YOUR FATHER, THEN.
Heh heh!

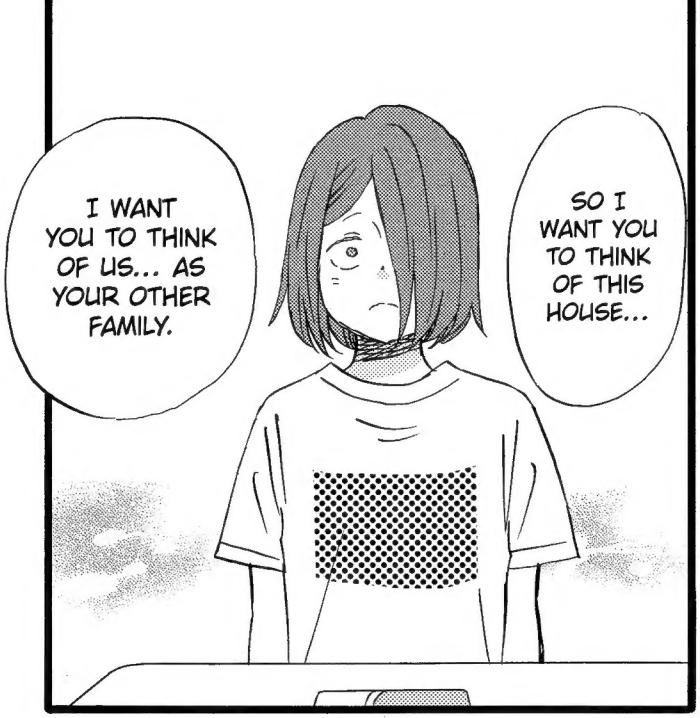

IN THE LETTER YOUR FATHER WROTE TO US, HE APOLOGIZED FOR HIS SELFISH ACTIONS, AND...
HE HUMBLY REQUESTED THAT WE TAKE CARE OF YOU.


RIGHT NOW, THERE'S NOT MUCH MONEY IN THAT BANK ACCOUNT, BUT...
HE INTENDS TO MAKE MONTHLY DEPOSITS IN IT FOR YOUR USE.

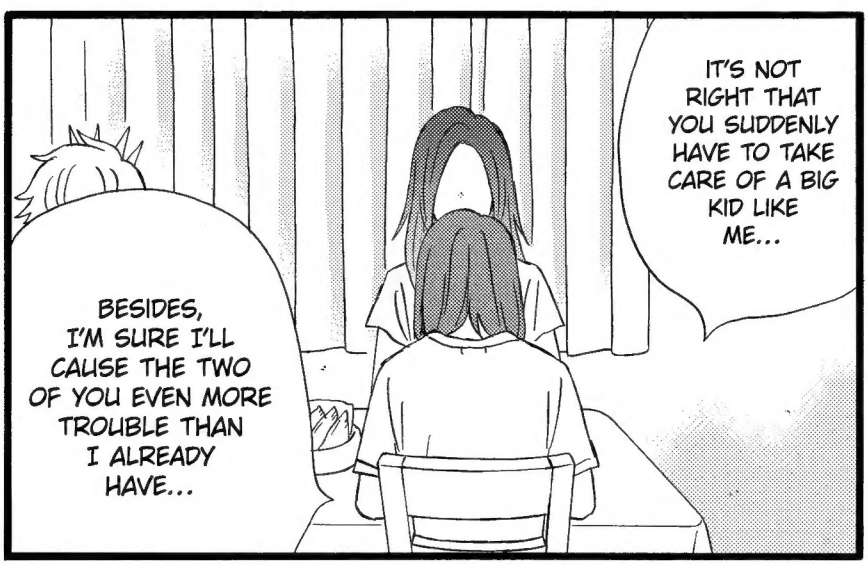
IT ALSO LOOKS LIKE HE LEFT A BANKBOOK INSIDE ONE OF YOUR BAGS.
WHAT?!


FATHER...

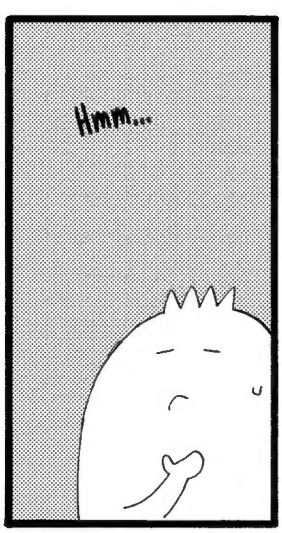


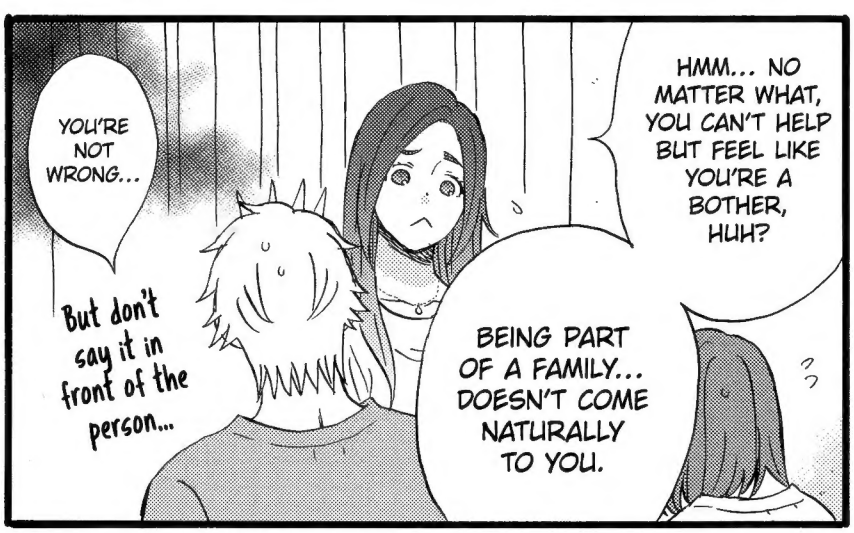

I WANT YOU TO THINK OF US... AS YOUR OTHER FAMILY.
SO I WANT YOU TO THINK OF THIS HOUSE...

YOUR FATHER ISN'T LIKE MY MOTHER.
I'M SURE YOU'LL MEET HIM AGAIN ONE DAY.

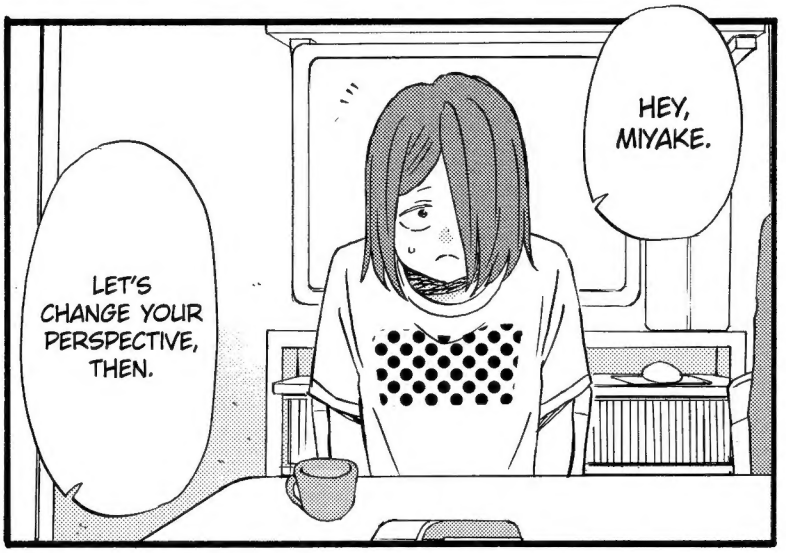

IT'S NOT RIGHT THAT YOU SUDDENLY HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF A BIG KID LIKE ME...
BESIDES, I'M SURE I'LL CAUSE THE TWO OF YOU EVEN MORE TROUBLE THAN I ALREADY HAVE...

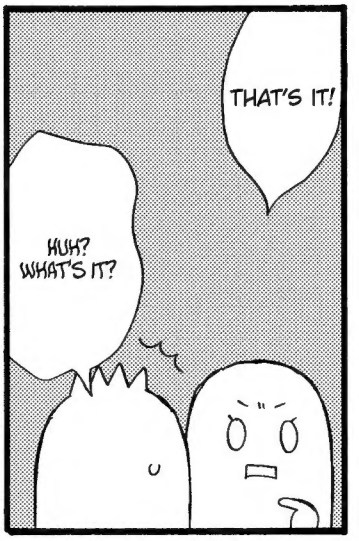
...
...BUT...


Hmm...

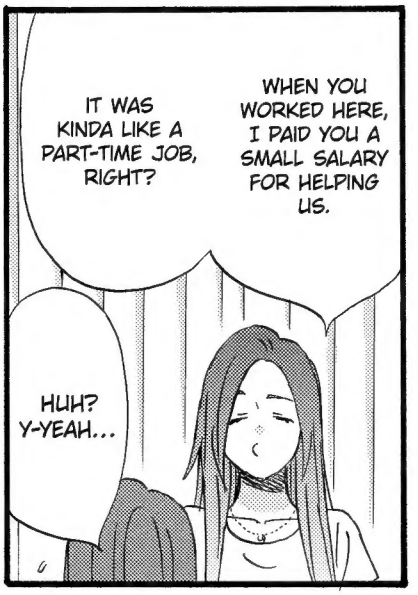

YOU'RE NOT WRONG...
But don't say it in front of the person...
HMM... NO MATTER WHAT, YOU CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL LIKE YOU'RE A BOTHER, HUH?
BEING PART OF A FAMILY... DOESN'T COME NATURALLY TO YOU.

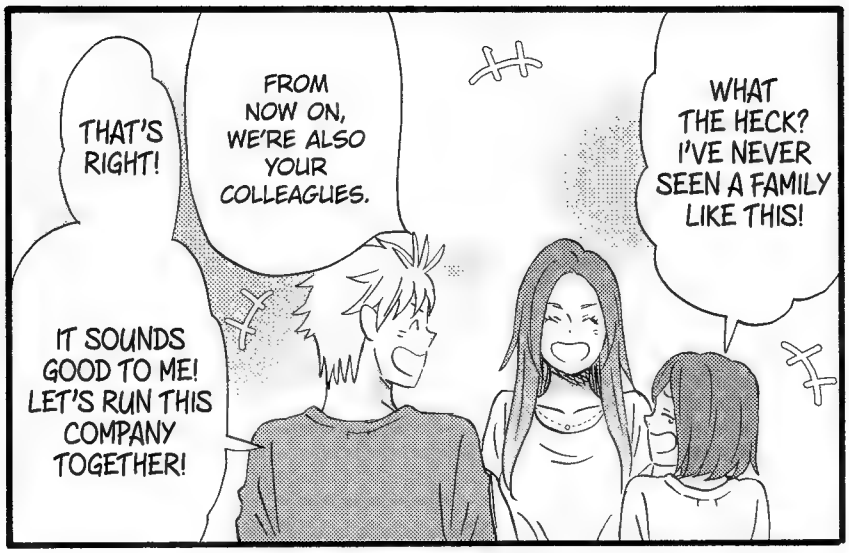
Ha ha ha!
THEN AGAIN...
WHO ARE WE TO JUDGE HIM? WE'RE NOT EXACTLY A NORMAL MARRIED COUPLE.


HEY, MIYAKE.
LET'S CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE, THEN.


THAT'S IT!
HUH? WHAT'S IT?

It's a promotion!!
SO... HOW ABOUT YOU THINK OF THIS AS RECOGNITION FOR YOUR WORK?
YOU'RE NOW OUR FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE ...!!

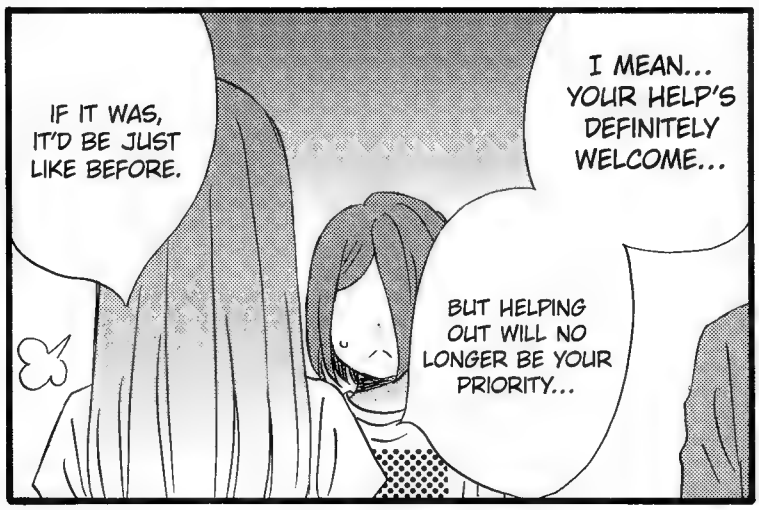

WHEN YOU WORKED HERE, I PAID YOU A SMALL SALARY FOR HELPING US.
IT WAS KINDA LIKE A PART-TIME JOB, RIGHT?
HUH? Y-YEAH...


THAT'S RIGHT!
FROM NOW ON, WE'RE ALSO YOUR COLLEAGUES.
WHAT THE HECK? I'VE NEVER SEEN A FAMILY LIKE THIS!
IT SOUNDS GOOD TO ME! LET'S RUN THIS COMPANY TOGETHER!

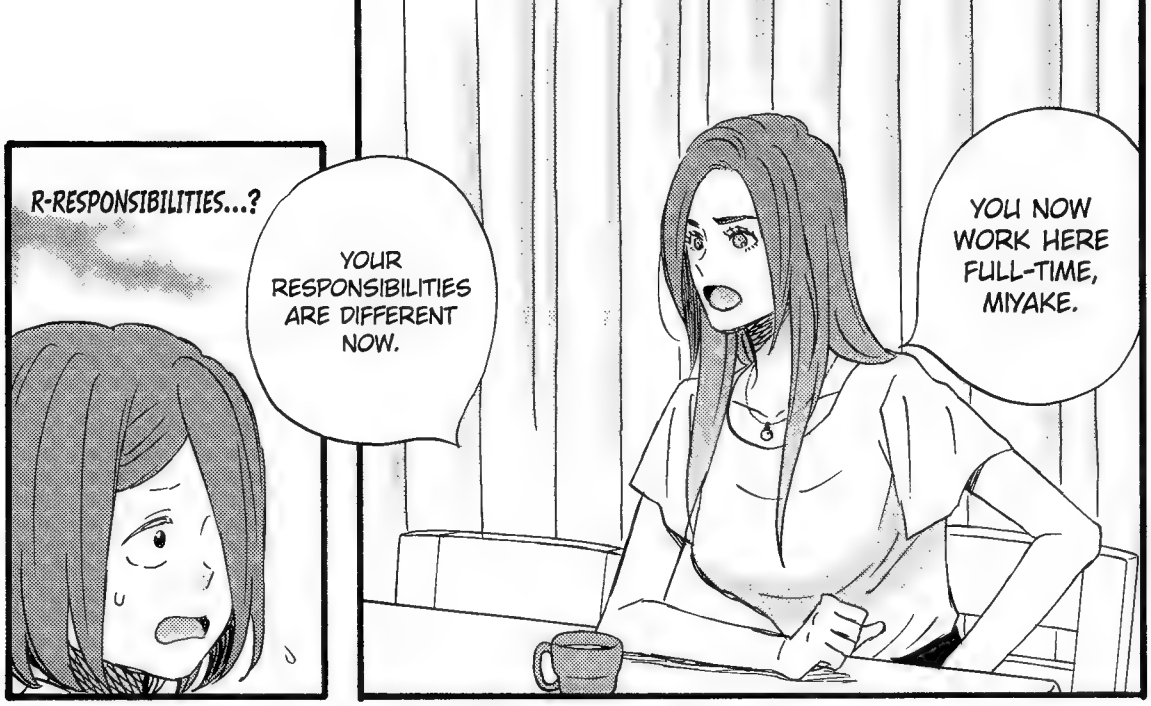
...PFFT!

I'LL DO ANYTHING, SO GO AHEAD AND WORK ME TO THE BONE...!
I'LL ALWAYS BE BACK AS SOON AS SCHOOL'S OVER!
I'LL HELP YOU AS MUCH AS I CAN!
OHH...

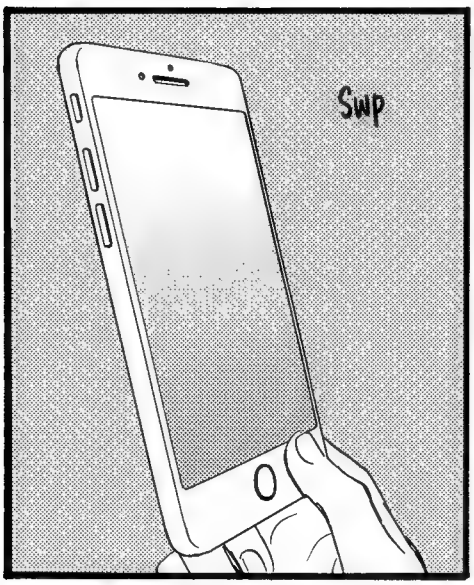
REALLY... THANKS A LOT, YOU TWO!
...THANK YOU.

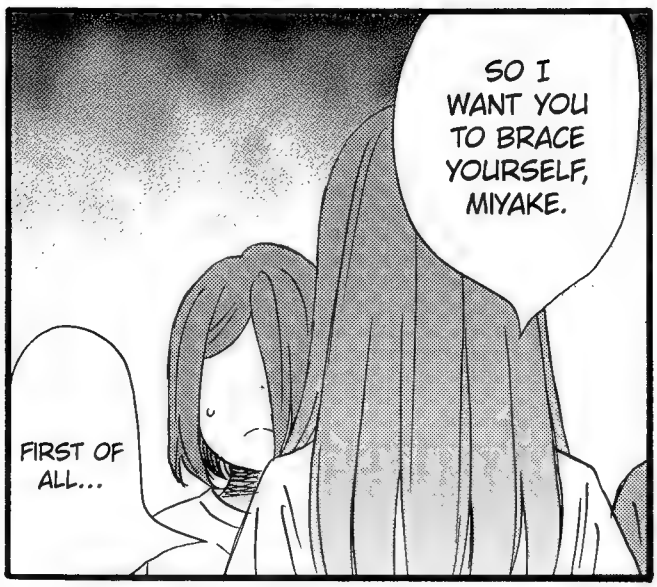

IF IT WAS, IT'D BE JUST LIKE BEFORE.
I MEAN... YOUR HELP'S DEFINITELY WELCOME...
BUT HELPING OUT WILL NO LONGER BE YOUR PRIORITY...

UH, NOPE. THAT WON'T DO.
HUH?!

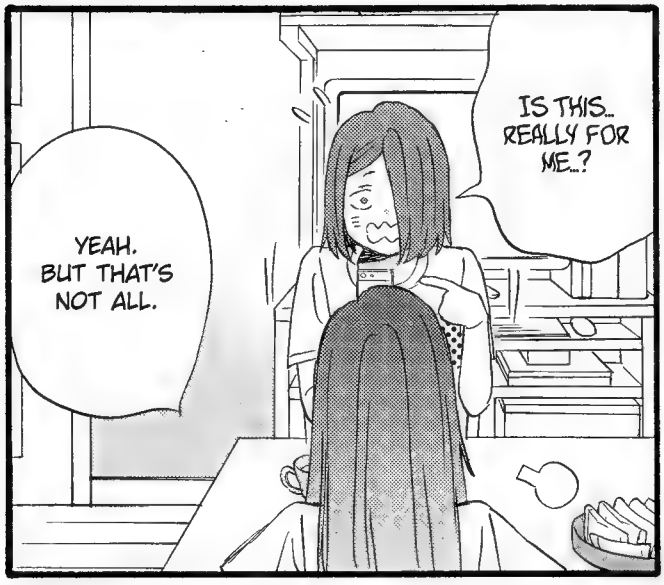

R-RESPONSIBILITIES...?
YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES ARE DIFFERENT NOW.
YOU NOW WORK HERE FULL-TIME, MIYAKE.

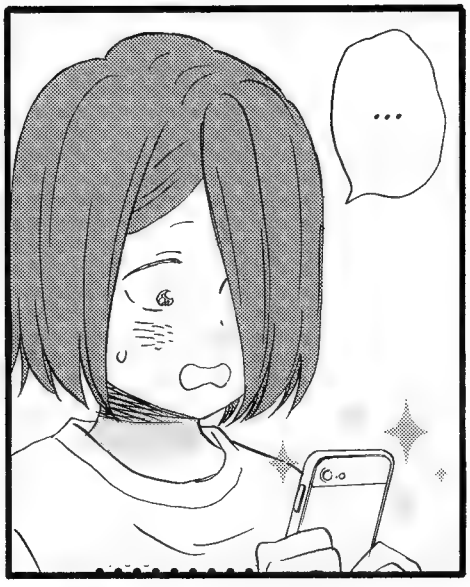
IT SURE IS. DIDN'T YOU NOTICE, KIRISHIMA-KUN?
HUH?! IS THIS A SWEATSHOP?!
Y'SEE, THIS COMPANY IS KIND OF A SWEATSHOP...


SWP

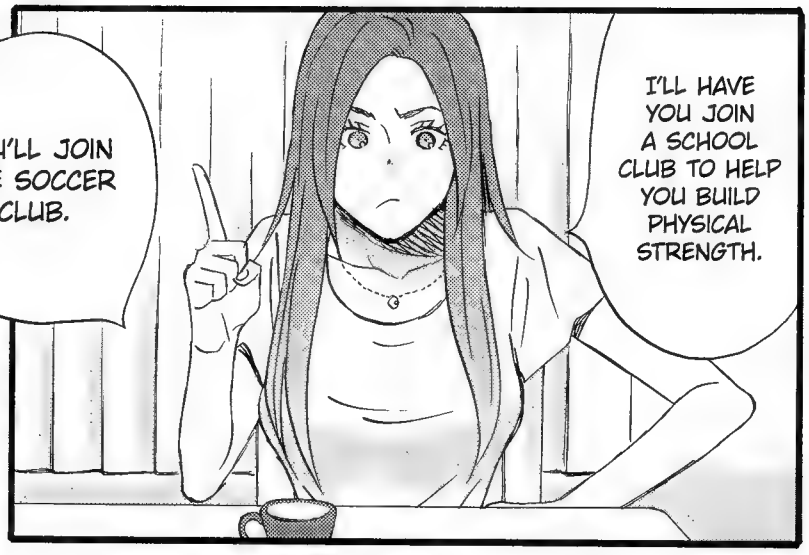

SO I WANT YOU TO BRACE YOURSELF, MIYAKE.
FIRST OF ALL...

WITH THIS, YOU'LL BE UNDER 24-HOUR SURVEILLANCE.
THE COMPANY WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH A SMARTPHONE.

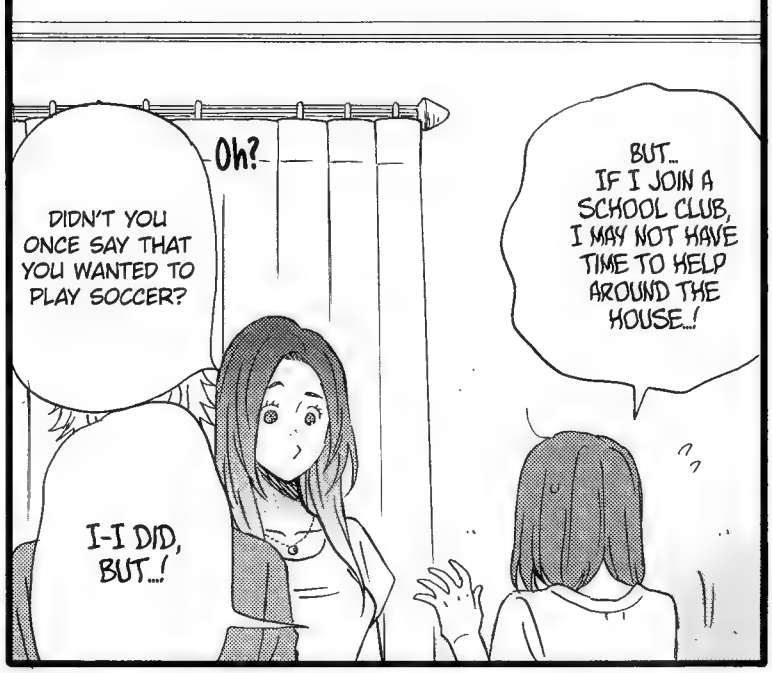

IS THIS... REALLY FOR ME...?
YEAH. BUT THAT'S NOT ALL.

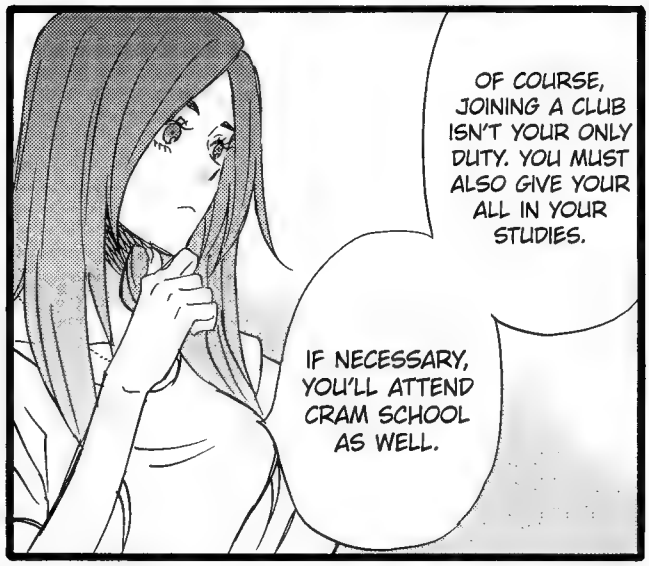

...

WHAAAT?!

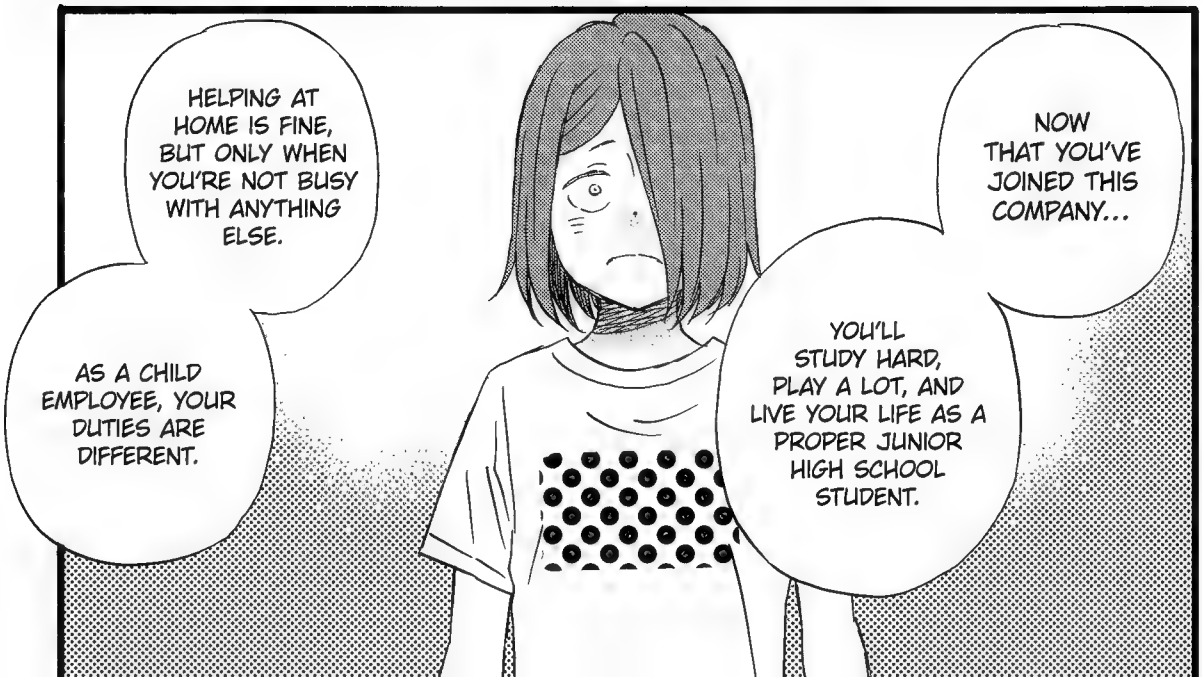

YOU'LL JOIN THE SOCCER CLUB.
I'LL HAVE YOU JOIN A SCHOOL CLUB TO HELP YOU BUILD PHYSICAL STRENGTH.

IT'S OKAY WITH ME IF YOU WANT TO JOIN A DIFFERENT CLUB.
NO, NO... THAT'S NOT THE PROBLEM!


Oh?
DIDN'T YOU ONCE SAY THAT YOU WANTED TO PLAY SOCCER?
I-I DID, BUT...!
BUT... IF I JOIN A SCHOOL CLUB, I MAY NOT HAVE TIME TO HELP AROUND THE HOUSE...!


OF COURSE, JOINING A CLUB ISN'T YOUR ONLY DUTY. YOU MUST ALSO GIVE YOUR ALL IN YOUR STUDIES.
IF NECESSARY, YOU'LL ATTEND CRAM SCHOOL AS WELL.

IF I JOIN THE SOCCER CLUB, I'LL NEED CLEATS AND A UNIFORM, BOTH OF WHICH WILL COST MONEY...
YOU CAN LABEL IT AS A "COMPANY EXPENSE."


HELPING AT HOME IS FINE, BUT ONLY WHEN YOU'RE NOT BUSY WITH ANYTHING ELSE.
AS A CHILD EMPLOYEE, YOUR DUTIES ARE DIFFERENT.
NOW THAT YOU'VE JOINED THIS COMPANY...
YOU'LL STUDY HARD, PLAY A LOT, AND LIVE YOUR LIFE AS A PROPER JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT.

YOU SURE DO. I TOLD YOU, DIDN'T I? THIS IS A SWEATSHOP.

I HAVE A LOT MORE THINGS TO DO NOW...

YEAH...

ANY QUESTIONS SO FAR?

...

I'LL DO MY BEST, OKAY...? REALLY...

THANKS A LOT, YOU TWO...

True. Should we call him Jun from now on?

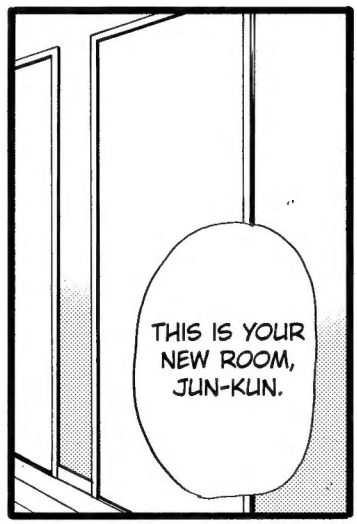
That being said, it feels odd to keep calling him by his last name.

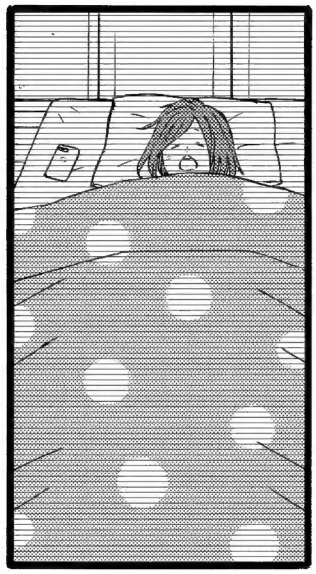
WELCOME, MIYAKE.

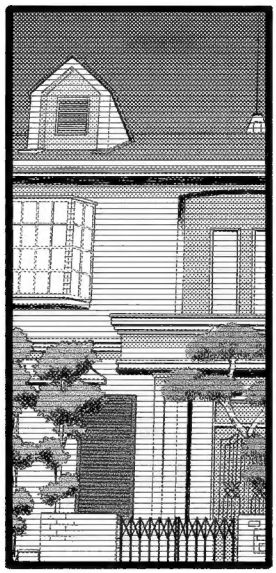
WELCOME TO THE COMPANY, MIYAKE-KUN.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH...

OKAY.
IT'S PRETTY EMPTY RIGHT NOW. WE NEED TO GO SHOPPING SOON...
AND MAKE SOME NECESSARY PURCHASES. LIKE A STUDY DESK.

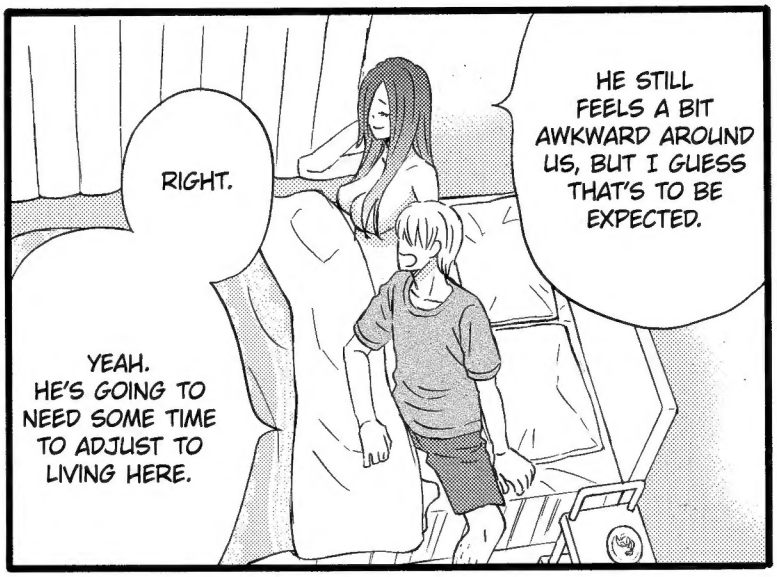

THIS IS YOUR NEW ROOM, JUN-KUN.





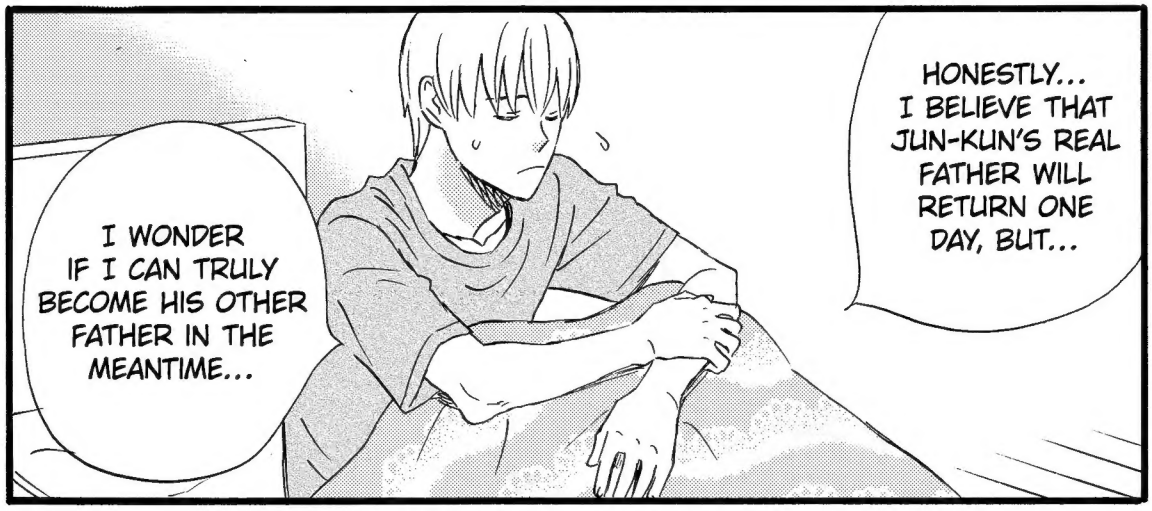
THANK YOU.
BY THE WAY, THE ROOM I SHARE WITH ISHIMURA-SAN IS RIGHT NEXT DOOR.
JUST LET ME KNOW IF YOU NEED ANYTHING.

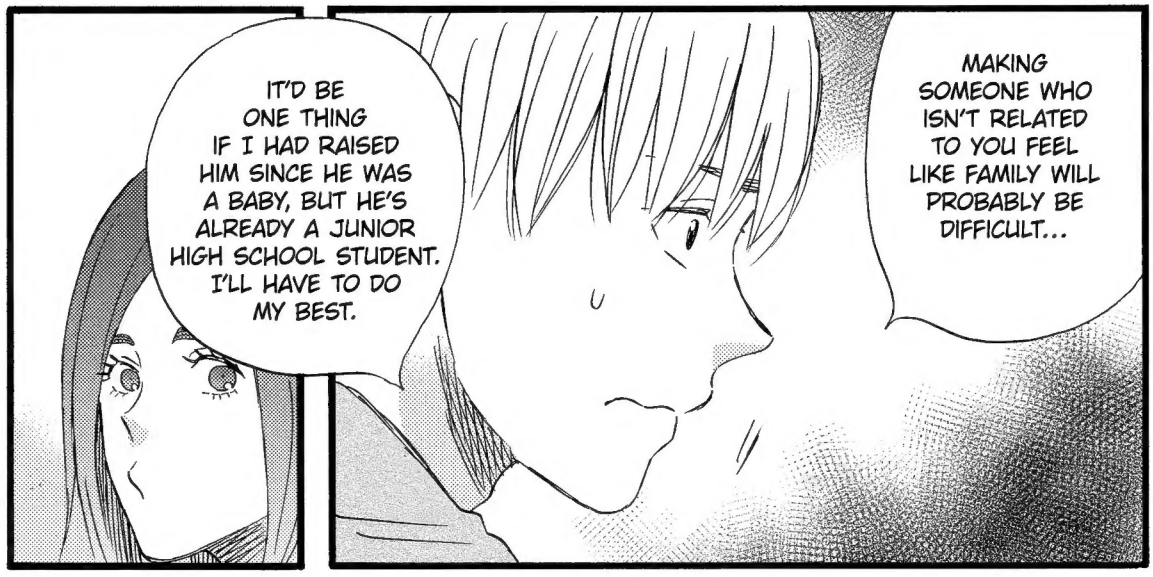
STILL, I'VE GOTTA SAY...
Siiigh...
I DIDN'T EXPECT US TO ADOPT MIYA... I MEAN, JUN-KUN.


HE STILL FEELS A BIT AWKWARD AROUND US, BUT I GUESS THAT'S TO BE EXPECTED.
RIGHT.
YEAH. HE'S GOING TO NEED SOME TIME TO ADJUST TO LIVING HERE.

SUDDENLY BECOMING A PARENT FEELS NO LESS INCREDIBLE.
SUDDENLY GETTING MARRIED WAS QUITE THE SURPRISE, BUT...
Ha ha...

I GUESS SO.
THAT MEANS THAT THE TWO OF US ARE NOW PARENTS.
I'M HAVING A CHILD AT THIS AGE...


HONESTLY... I BELIEVE THAT JUN-KUN'S REAL FATHER WILL RETURN ONE DAY, BUT...
I WONDER IF I CAN TRULY BECOME HIS OTHER FATHER IN THE MEANTIME...


IT'D BE ONE THING IF I HAD RAISED HIM SINCE HE WAS A BABY, BUT HE'S ALREADY A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT. I'LL HAVE TO DO MY BEST.
MAKING SOMEONE WHO ISN'T RELATED TO YOU FEEL LIKE FAMILY WILL PROBABLY BE DIFFICULT...

I'M SURE YOU'LL BE FINE.

EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT RELATED BY BLOOD, YOU CAN BECOME SOMEONE'S FAMILY.

YOU AND I WERE ALSO ORIGINALLY STRANGERS.

THAT'S JUST HOW IT IS. FAMILIES ARE ONLY FORMED BECAUSE STRANGERS COME TOGETHER. SO...

AND SO, KIRISHIMA-KUN AND ISHIMURA-SAN BECAME PARENTS.

RIGHT!

NOW THAT THERE'S A CHILD IN THE HOUSE, A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT LIFE BEGINS FOR THE TWO.

WHILE THE ADDITION OF THIS NEW MEMBER TO THE FAMILY WILL BRIGHTEN THEIR DAYS...

IT MAY ALSO BRING NEW CHALLENGES.

STILL...

HE THOUGHT...

"AS LONG AS I'M TOGETHER WITH ISHIMURA-SAN, I CAN DO MY BEST."

KIRISHIMA-KUN WAS CERTAIN OF THAT.

...YEAH, BUT...

WAIT A MINUTE! WE HAVEN'T EVEN HAD SEX ONCE. HOW COME WE'RE ALREADY AT THE PARENTHOOD STAGE?!

Huuh?!

SNORE...

SNORE...

THE STRANGE MARRIED COUPLE ARE NOW PARENTS TOO.